

October

TWIN CITIES ATARI INTEREST GROUP

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President: Steve Ingalsbe (452-7196) Vice President: Tom Green

Treasurer: Dick Johnson Secretary: Paul Franson

Newsletter Editor: Cory Johnson (473-4190)

All Around Nice Guy: Dave Stengel

Membership renewal

You may renew your membership at the meeting, or send a check for \$15.00 made out to TAIG, and on a seperate piece of paper, your name, and address to

Marshall Keith 413 Connelly Lane, Burnsville, MN. 55337.

For more information, call Marshall at 435-1072.

Article submission

Articles should be submitted in standard text files (Atari Writer, Hometext, Speedscript).

If you don't own a wordprocessor, you can enter an article into BASIC using REM statments. Or, send legibly written or typed text (make any schematics legible also, we can't reprint what we can't read) to

Cory Johnson 1835 Shadyview Circle, Plymouth, MN. 55447

Articles may also be dropped off at
Wizard's Work, Co. Rd. 9 and Co. Rd. 18, Plymouth, MN. (In the Fourseason Mall)

If you wish, you can also upload your article to the BBS. Leave a message to the sysop stating that the upload was an article. The BBS number is 612/522-2687

DEADLINE

Deadline for submission is the 10th of the month. Any articles recived after the 10th will be held until the next newsletter.

Newsletter exchange

If you are another Atari interest group, and you wish to exchange newsletters, please mail your latest newsletter to:

1835 Shadyview Circle Plymouth, Mn 55447.

Minneapolis Children's Hospital to Receive Atari Computers

Atari is donating 28 Atari 130XE computers, 1050 disk drives, XMM801 printers, color monitors, joysticks, and software to 10 Children's Hospitals across the United States. Minneapolis has been chosen as one of these sites and will receive 3 of these systems.

Hi Tech Expressions is also donating PartyWare, CardWare, Heartware, WareWithAll, Jingle Disk, and Holiday Printer Paper the new animated greeting cards which run on Atari and Commodore computers. The cards can also be printed and personalized with your own message. PartyWare is a great little program which can be used to print invitations, banners, placemats, place card, party hats, games, prizes and thank you notes. All personalized from a database of your guests names.

Atari is also supplying some software; Star Raiders, Defender, Atariwriter Plus, Home Filing Manager, and Music Composer.

TAIG has been asked by Hi Tech to be present at the presentation, at the Mpls Children's Hospital November 7th and to provide some support to the Hospital and to get them over the hurdle of using the new computers and software. Which of course brings us to the subject of volunteers. We need someone to act as liaison and help the children and nurses. This may require some time at the Hospital itself, but I'm sure that most questions can be answered over the phone. This is an excellent opportunity for someone who likes children and would like to give a little of him or herself.

This sounded like such a good idea that I called SPACE to ask if they would like to participate. After talking it over we decided it would be nice if we could put together a package for the St Paul Children's Hospital. After taking

it to a vote of the SPACE membership, it was agreed to go ahead with the plan. I'm pleased to report that 3 members of SPACE have volunteered, the phone numbers of these people along with those who volunteer from TAIG will be given to both hospitals unless you wish to associate with only one for phone support.

Originally the plan was to put the package together from donations from SPACE and TAIG members. Since then Bruce Haug (president of SPACE) has contacted ATARI about possible contributions of ATARI equipment. ATARI has responded favorably and has suggested other possible avenues of donations as well.

Therefore our most important resource is ourselves, however if would like to contribute hardware, software, or cash please contact Bruce Haug at 774-6226 or Dick Johnson at 521-0245. Cash donations should be made out to TAIG or SPACE Hospital Contribution and sent to the corresponding club. Don't forget its TAX deductible!

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Editors Notes
by Cory Johnson

A big THANK YOU to Chuck Grimsby for his articles this month. He also wrote an article for us last month (the Life article). I think it'd be great if everyone wrote 1 article a year, let a lone 2 a month. (Chuck, remember you get a free DOM at the next meeting for your contribution)

A long time ago, when the BBS was in my care, and the Percom drives were causing enormous problems, many members were very quick to say how they would write articles, if they could upload them. Since then, the BBS has gotten some new management, and is borrowing a Supra 10meg drive. It is also always up. So, why are there only Chucks articles online? It's up, there's more than enough storage, let's see if we can't bring this newsletter back from being an anthology of old news and articles from everyone elses newsletters. It can't be done without your help. So, write something. Articles on business, telecommunications, new and unique hardware, software reviews, your opinions, anything. The newsletter is supposed to be your medium for communicating your accomplishments with the rest of the members. Frankly, I stopped having anything original to write about 6 months ago. I fear that the same will happen to Chuck in a few months, and we'll be back with nothing original.

The BBS

We are having a problem with the BBS, like the newsletter, it suffers from lack of use. Your membership entitles you to high access on the BBS. Please use it. Tom Green was kind enough to take his own board down and lend his 10 meg drive to Taig. That drive was expensive, and it's simply not worth keeping it online if it's not going to be used. It'd be ashame to loose it (if things don't improve, it is very possible that Tom will take his drive back, thus, leaving the BBS with only 1 810 and 1 1050 for storage).

So come on folks, were supposed to be computer

enthusiasts, let's show some enthusiasim.

Thanks Also...

Thanks to Nathan Block for his article, it arrived the day before the newsletter was to go to the printer, after I had printed out my final copy of the editors notes, so I just tacked this thank you onto the end. Nathan, you too can pick up a free DOM at the next meeting. Thanks again.

Avoiding ERROR-3
By Nathan D. Block

Are you a programmer that uses graphics in your programs? If so, this article is for you!

I use graphics all the time. One of the problems I get is an ERROR 3 which is a value error. This happens when the character that is being moved by joystick is moved off the screen and the values can't handle it. Thanks to many days and months of programming, I have devised a way to foil this error. Just before a PLOT or POSITION statement is executed, (which of course is moving the character) use a GOSUB statement. Then, on the GOSUB line number, define your variable or boundries. Then when it returns from the subroutine, this error will not occur. If you don't understand, refer to the diagram below.

```
10 REM YOUR PROGRAM GOES
20 REM HERE. LINE NUMBERS
30 REM ARE ARBITRARY
35 GOSUB 100
40 POSITION X,Y
100 IF X<0 THEN X=0
110 IF X>144 THEN X=144
120 RETURN
```

Lines 10-30 define the joystick patterns and movements. Line 35 is the GOSUB. When the RETURN command is issued the X variable has been checked to eliminate the error.

I hope this article has helped. I am a new member, and am ready to share some of my tips with you, give advice, or give you my programs. Please see me if you would like to talk to me! I'm Nathan Block and you can see me at the meetings, or call me at 922-8012

Hacking The Joystick Port
by Chuck Grimsby

As every Atari Basic programmer knows, the joystick port can be used to produce nine different actions or commands (excluding the center or 'null' position), utilizing the STICK(x) and STRIG(x) commands. The numbers your programs look for are:

<u>value</u>	<u>stick position</u>
14	UP
13	DOWN
7	RIGHT
11	LEFT
6	UP RIGHT
5	DOWN RIGHT
9	DOWN LEFT
10	UP LEFT
15	CENTER (NULL)
0	FIRE, (USEING STRIG(0))
1	NOT FIRE

You may have noticed that there are some numbers missing from that list, and from all lists that show you how to use the STICK(x) command. Where are the numbers 0-4, 8 and 12?

Well, actually those numbers are there and are readable, but you can't use a normal joystick to produce them. You either need a numeric keypad (like the old Atari CX-85) or a special 'joystick' consisting of buttons in place of a single stick.

I built myself a special joystick to use as a non-moving mouse (my desk space is VERY limited) and discovered I had also created a joystick that would produce those non-standard numbers.

My brother has dubbed this device a 'Dead Mouse' and it has proved to be very handy. It also works great as a very accurate joystick for MicroPainter.

The new STICK(x) list using the Dead Mouse looks like this:

<u>VALUE</u>	<u>BUTTON(S) PRESSED</u>
0	UP DOWN LEFT RIGHT
1	DOWN LEFT RIGHT
2	UP LEFT RIGHT
3	RIGHT LEFT
4	UP DOWN RIGHT
5	DOWN RIGHT
6	UP RIGHT

7	RIGHT
8	UP DOWN LEFT
9	DOWN LEFT
10	UP LEFT
11	LEFT
12	UP DOWN
13	DOWN
14	UP
15	NONE (NULL)

The numbers produced thru the Dead Mouse can also be used to simulate the numeric keypad IF you have the proper AUTORUN.SYS AND press the FIRE button with other keys.

The following list shows functions that the Dead Mouse presses will return. Remember ALWAYS press the FIRE button well.

<u>FUNCTION</u>	<u>DEAD MOUSE</u>
DELETE	UP DOWN LEFT RIGHT
YES	UP DOWN LEFT
NO	UP DOWN RIGHT
-	NONE (NO KEY PRESSED)
+ENTER	UP
0	UP DOWN
1	DOWN LEFT
2	UP LEFT
3	LEFT
4	DOWN LEFT RIGHT
5	UP LEFT RIGHT
6	RIGHT LEFT
7	DOWN RIGHT
8	UP RIGHT
9	RIGHT

The construction of the Mouse is simple, due to the fact that every joystick made after 1980 uses four buttons on the joystick activated by moving the stick. You need to make the Dead Mouse by using five momentary contact buttons, a female D9 connector, a six conductor cable, and a project box.

You can save yourself time and trouble by using the buttons from an old broken joystick, buying a joystick extension cable, and cutting off one end instead of making a new cable.

Start by drilling five holes for the buttons in the lid of the project box a little bit larger than the size of the buttons.

one hole in the side of the box for the cable to the computer.

Next mount and secure the five buttons in the holes and pass the cable through the hole in the side of the box. Make a knot in the cable on the inside so the cable won't pull out.

Now solder the wire from the cable to the switches following the table below. NOTE: Solder to ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE BUTTON!!

```

u 1 2 3 4 5 u
\ 0 0 0 0 0 /
u \ 0 0 0 0 / u
  6 7 8 9

```

PIN #	BUTTON
2	RIGHT
3	LEFT
4	DOWN
5	UP
9	FIRE

Now solder pin #7 to the other side of ALL the buttons. This is the common or "ground" line.

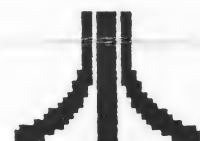
Put the lid on your box, and your Dead Mouse is ready to use.

From experience, the Dead Mouse is a very poor joystick. Don't even bother to try and use it for game playing. It is, however, a more professional looking device for use as a mouse than a joystick, and a accurate drawing tool for MicroPainter.

The Taig/Space BBS
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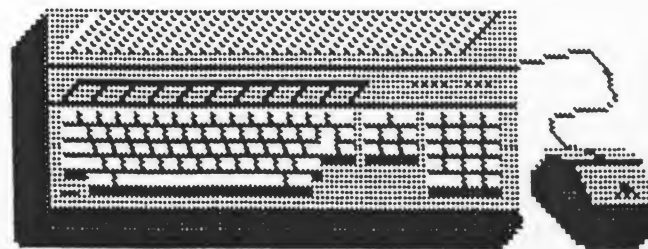
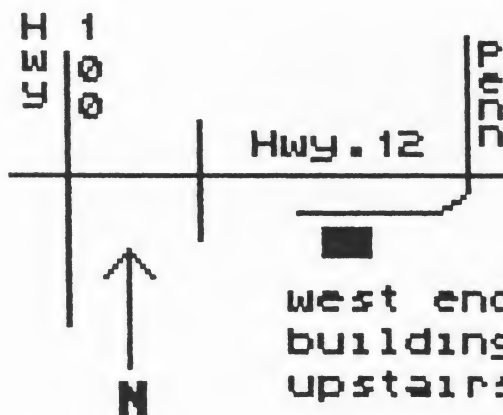
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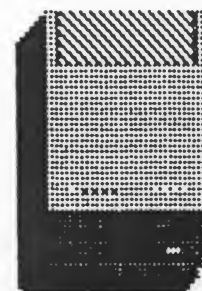
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ATARI

SALES & SERVICE



Minutes of the September 28th TAIG Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm.

In national news,

1. The Chipmunk backup program was announced. This program allows backup of disk software titles listed with the package. It works by circumventing the copy protection of the package. Chipmunk requires an Indus GT disk drive to operate. The price is \$35.

2. The serial port doubler allows you to use up to eight disk drives and two direct connect printers on your Atari. The price of this hardware package is \$25.

3. A bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives (HR4949) which would make it illegal to rent computer software. From the standpoint of many computer users, this would not be a good law, so write your congressman if you feel strongly on this issue.

4. The Atari eight and sixteen bit computers were shown in London at an Atari conference. The computers are very well received in Europe, and support was enthusiastic at this show.

In local news,

1. Steve is donating a copy of Indus GT software to TAIG. This includes data base, spreadsheet, and word processing software.

2. User Friendly Computers will offer demo copies of software for meetings. They will then give a 20% discount on software if the club orders six or more packages as a group.

3. The treasury situation is bleak.

4. Dave Stengel has left TAIG. We would like to extend our appreciation to Dave for his work in handling newsletter and disk of the month duties.

5. There was no Analog disk of the month this month, but it should be available at the October meeting for both months.

6. The TAIG DOM this month contains:

Life - Extensions to the version recently published in Antic.

Steve's 320XE and 256XL ram disk handlers

Mugwump - an old public domain classic

HP Golf - A golf simulation

850 Express v3.0 - An update to the classic terminal program.

7. Also in DOM news, Tom Green has written a new menu loader for the DOM, so we don't have to use the one from Eugene Oregon any more.

8. The diskettes ordered last month were received and can be gotten from Dick Johnson.

Of Doorstops and Wrenches
by Chuck Grimsby

As some of you may know, I'm a computer fanatic. I exclaim out the greatness of computers at every opportunity, and I think everyone should have one, and know how to use it.

However, I've always had a problem dealing with the people who don't understand computers. Until one person told me that I sounded like a ham radio "nut". "that's it", I thought. I'm talking in computer-esse. No, wait a minute, I use the phrases they use in computer stores. phrases like, "A computer is just a tool, like a wrench." And "Without the right software, a computer makes a good doorstep."

But these anaologies are wrong. they give the impression that a computer is realy a simple mechanism, good for a few things, not good for others.

So I started searching for a more reasonable analogy. Finally, I came up with a car. A car is a fairly good analogy for several reasons.

1) a car is a complex mechanism that can be operated well by anyone of almost any intelligence level.

2) They come in various shapes and sizes each with it's own operating level and performance standards. Not too mention there are also standard features and add-ons that can be purchased.

3) A lot of terms in car-esse are directly translatable to computer-esse. You start a car, Boot a computer. You can run out of gas, or you can run out of memory. Complex trips may require you to look at a map, Complex programs can require you to look at the documentation. The carb can get fouled leaving you stranded, the program can have a "glitch" forcing you to re-boot. You have a wide choice of routes to get to where you're going, There's a wide choice of programs to do what you want.

Well, I could go on like that forever. The point I'm trying to make, is that in our attempts to make the non-computerized person understand what a computer is, we tend to oversimplify. We turn a highly complex electronic

processing machine into a wrench or doorstop.

In conversations with the uncomputerized, we are always asked, "what can you do with a computer" or "What do you do with your computer". Those questions never fail to stupify the computer user into giving out the same three answers: Word Processing, Spreadsheets, and Games. The Big Three. A few of us also add Telecommunications. But there is a LOT more that can and is being done with computers.

Probably, instead of games, Filing should be mentioned as one of the Big Three. Billions of bytes of data are being kept by Millions of computer users all across the nation, and the world, and yet we always seem to forget about this when we're asked. People keep records on their softball team, their personal home libraries of books, music albums, cassette tapes. They keep names and addresses, birthdays, and phone numbers on their computer, as well as Christmas card lists, family geneology, lists of the furniture and stereo equipment, Stock and bond portfolios, Bank Accounts..... The list goes on and on.

With your home computer you can become a publisher. From club newsletters to magazines to newspapers, to the "Great American Novel", there are programs to help you set up and publish nearly anything at any distribution level. Of course, if you're thinking of doing a large scale operation, you're going to want to contact a printer to do the actual printing for you.

Another use is Art. We use our personal home computers to store pictures that we ourselves have drawn, and those created by others. We can change the colors, the shape, the size to fit our own personal tastes. We can set them up so that a series of pictures display in a never ending pattern on our T.V.'s. We can make them move, to animate them. We can call them "Graphics" to sound professional, and add them into a business presentation.

Then there's home security. Thousands are setting up their

P.C.'s when they leave their homes to act as watchdog. A modem can be used to call the police, or a beeper to alert us to any disruption at our home, even if the power goes off.

And what about teaching? For everything as complex as foreign languages to the basic A-B-C's and 1-2-3's. A side effect to using a computer, is that it forces one's reading skills to grow. Though it is possible to get a computer to talk and to understand the spoken word, it's not very common. There are programs to teach Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Trigonometry, Statistics, Anatomy, Cooking, Budgeting Skills, Sailing, Flying, Electronics, Mechanics, There are even programs to teach you how to use and program computers, S.A.T. programs... Well, the list is endless, and growing daily.

Think Computer Simulations are only for large Supercomputers? Think again. With the right software You can "Issue" you own weather forecast, with surprizing accuracy. Watch the growth of a plant or mold with one of the oldest computer simulations, orginally meant as a teaching device: "LIFE". Want to see how a nuclear reactor works? How about being an Air Traffic Controller. Will the Stock Market Crash, or See how any war in history was fought. How accurate is "Star Wars"? How does a Greenhouse work? What would happen if the Earth's temperature would rise?

All this and more can be run on small home computers.

To summerize, what is a computer? It's not a wrench, a doorstop, or even a car for that matter. A computer is a complex electronic information processing machine, that you don't have to understand how it works to use. It can do anything with whatever information, including words, ideas, pictures, or mathamatical formulas, that you choose to put into it.

If you want more information on what software is available, visit your local software store and take a look around, even if you dont own a computer. Granted, most of the software you'll see, will be

one of the Big Three: word processing, spreadsheets, or games, but most software stores have a catalog of other programs they don't have on the shelves. Ask for a look. Most software stores also have a computer there in the store, and they'll be more then happy to show you any program they have.

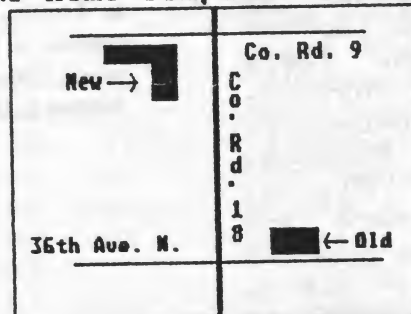
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Our new telephone number is: 559-4690

Our new hours are:

Mon. - Thu. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Fri. & Sat. 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

We have always appreciated our customers' support and invite you to visit us in our new location.

Phil, Phyllis, Gordy, Rhona & Cory

Twin Cities Atari Interest Group
4309 Suncliff Drive
Egan Mn 55122.



Next TAIG meeting
Sunday, October 26th
TAIG 7:00 pm.